

# Water Starwort *Callitriche* spp.

Native to the Chesapeake Bay

**Family** - Callichtrichaceae

**Distribution** - Water starworts are widespread, usually in quiet non-tidal fresh waters. Water starworts can also be found occasionally in upper tidal waters.

**Recognition** - Water starworts are small plants with very bright green leaves. The leaves are obovate to oval in shape and are 2 cm long and 3 to 8 mm wide. When it grows on mud in low-water conditions, the leaves of water starwort are oblong. Upper leaves of the plants are obovate to oval and are often floating or emergent. The genus *Callitriche* also includes one terrestrial species (*C. deflexa*).

**Ecological Significance** - *Callitriche* is found in all 49 continental states.

**Similar species** - When underwater and without flowers or seeds, the water starworts can resemble common waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*). Water starwort, however, has only two leaves at each joint whereas the leaves of common waterweed grow in whorls of 3.

**Reproduction** - Flowering occurs in July to September. Small flowers grow together in groups of 1 to 3, without perianth, in the axils of leaves; these form numerous seeds closely set within the leaf axils.

